

SARL NEWS SUNDAY 21 OCTOBER 2007

You are listening to ZS6SRL the official Radio Station of the South African Radio League, the National Body for Amateur Radio in South Africa, with a news bulletin that is transmitted every Sunday at 08:15 CAT in Afrikaans and at 08:30 CAT in English. To listen to a web stream or Echolink by ZS6FCS visit www.sarl.org.za, click on ARMI and follow the links for details.

You can download this and previous bulletins from www.sarl.org.za and you can also subscribe there to receive future bulletins by email.

Your news reader this morning is Hans, ZS6KR, on 145,725 and 7,066 MHz from Pretoria with relays on 3,695, 10,135, 14,235 as well as 51,400 MHz 28,235, 438,825 and 1 297 MHz FM in the Pretoria area. (Other newsreaders please change to suit).

In the news today:

SARL - HMO BEACON PROJECT TO BE OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED ON TUESDAY

DRAFT INTERIM PLT STANDARDS TO GO TO ICASA BOARD

IN TECHNOLOGY THIS WEEK

NOMINATIONS FOR SARL COUNCIL MEMBERS INVITED

You are listening to ZS6SRL. Stay tuned for more detail on these and other important and interesting news items.

SARL - HMO BEACON PROJECT TO BE OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED ON TUESDAY

The SARL - HMO Beacon Project will be official launched on Tuesday 23 October when the first beacon will be switched on at the National Amateur Radio Centre. During the first phase of the project there will be 30 beacons strategically placed around the country. The beacons are hosted by members of the South African Radio League and will operate on 7 023 kHz. The beacon will transmit CW at around 8 words per minute and will use the following message format: The example given here is for ZS6SRL. "VE ZS6SRL BCNLOC KG33WV" and a short message which will be followed by the tuning signal consisting of long dashes corresponding to the callsign division. For example if the beacon is located in division 6 the beacon will transmit 6 long dashes. Next will be the s-meter signal consisting of 4 dots. The s-meter signal varies with power from 40 mW to 5 mW in four steps. This is to ease reporting by students on receivers not fitted with an "S" meter. If they hear 4 dots it is 5<9 If they hear 2 dots it is 5<2 etc.

The short message will be used in a competition for learners. Final details are being worked out and will be announced at the beginning of the 2008 school year.

A full description of the beacon programme has been posted on the SARL web
DRAFT INTERIM PLT STANDARDS TO GO TO ICASA BOARD

The Standards Liaison committee (SLC) last week approved the draft interim Power Line Telecommunications standards for South Africa. The SLC agreed that only class B limits will apply as the minimum requirements. The class B limit for conducted disturbance is some 10dB more stringent than class A. The PLT industry had asked that class A limits apply in industrial areas and at sub-stations, a request that the SARL opposed at the committee stage,

The SARL is however not satisfied that compulsory notching of the Amateur HF bands has not been included in the draft standards which will now be considered by the ICASA board before being published in the Government Gazette for comment. At the comment stage the SARL will make further representation and submit documentation in support of the SARL position that all amateur HF bands must be notched and the 10dB notching level be increased to a higher value.

The interim PLT standards will be in force until international standards have been agreed on. One of the arguments the SARL is putting forward is that as limits in the interim PLT standards are based on the FCC limits, installations approved now may not meet the final international standards. The main stumbling block to get international agreed standards is agreement on the interference limits and method of testing. Many European players do not accept the FCC limits as satisfactorily.

DO NOT MISS OUT ON RADIO ZS, THE QSL BUREAUX AND MANY OTHER SERVICES

You could easily miss out on Radio ZS, the QSL Bureaux, access to members' only web pages and other services if your 2007/2008 subscription has not been renewed before October 31. This is a friendly reminder to listeners who have forgotten to pay their dues. It is so easy to mislay an invoice and forget about it! That is why reminders are being posted. If your remittance has crossed in the mail, please ignore the reminder, if not please do that electronic transfer today or mail a cheque ASAP. If you are not a member yet, it is never too late to join. Full details are available on www.sarl.org.za.

IN TECHNOLOGY THIS WEEK

Two new digital modes JT2 and JT4 are being supported by an experimental version of the popular WSJT weak signal software. Both are both designed for making QSOs under extremely weak-signal conditions while using the same message structure and source encoding as that used in J T 65.

The new mode called JT2 has a bandwidth of just 8,75 Hz enabling dozens of contacts to take place in the 2,4 kHz SSB stock filter bandwidth found in most of today's transceivers. The system uses 2-tone Frequency Shift Keying modulation for synchronization and differential BPSK for the encoded user information.

In this way both a sync bit and a data bit can be transmitted with each channel symbol. Symbols are sent at a rate of 4,375 baud, and tone separation for the 2 tone FSK modulation is 4,375 Hz.

The performance of JT2 may eventually be as good as JT65, or slightly better at 144 MHz and below. If it can be made to work up to its potential, JT2 could be a great boon to random digital E-M-E operation on 2 metre, especially for those without panoramic wideband receivers and software like MAP 65. JT2 may also be attractive for use on the Very Low Frequency, Medium Frequency and High Frequency bands under weak-signal conditions.

JT4 is similar to JT2 except that it uses 4-tone Frequency Shift Keying. This, so it can also include both a sync bit and a data bit in each symbol. Again the keying rate is 4,375 baud, and a number of different tone spacing is offered

Further information on JT2 and JT4 is available on line. Visit www.sarl.org.za click on publications and select ARMI for links to the WSJT web pages

NOMINATIONS FOR SARL COUNCIL MEMBERS INVITED

Nominations for SARL Council members are invited and should reach the secretary by November 30 which is the closing date for nominations.

Councillors need certain skills, and a passion to improve and develop Amateur Radio in South Africa. We are fortunate that we have such councillors, but from time to time they have to relinquish their work on Council because of family matters, or work commitments, or just because they need a break so they can practice amateur radio. New councillors come with new ideas, and these are also necessary.

We also need to plan for the future and logically the President of the future needs to serve on Council for a few years to gain the necessary experience to become the President.

Being a member of Council is also an excellent way to learn the workings of the governing body for amateur radio in this country.

Members of the SARL are asked to nominate persons whom they think have the necessary skills, and are suitable for positions such as the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer of the SARL, or any of the other important portfolios. The closing date is November 30. If you wish to read more about the different portfolios of the SARL Council, visit www.sarl.org.za, click on services, select council and then Councillor Portfolios. You may just find a portfolio that will interest you.

Nominations should include a brief amateur radio related CV (not more than 200 words), be signed by the Nominator and Seconder and include an undertaking from the nominee that he or she accepts nomination and will serve on Council if elected.

CLUB NEWS

The Overberg Amateur Radio Club, ZS1OAR, in conjunction with the Hermanus Magnetic Observatory, ZS1HMO, is planning an open day to promote the HMO activities to the general public in Hermanus.

You are invited to visit the HMO on the morning of 27 October or come up on the air and chat with some of the local amateurs.

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the expected solar activity will be at very low levels. The geomagnetic field is expected to be quiet in general increasing to minor storm levels on 26 October. The expected Effective Sun Spot number for the coming week will be less than 5.

Fortunately with the arrival of summer DX conditions are also warming up a bit, especially the North-South paths.

15 m and 20 m will provide best opportunities for DX. There is a possibility of 10, 15 and 20 m openings towards India from about 14:00 CAT. There may be 20 m openings to Australia from about 06:00. From 16:00 there may be 10, 15 and 20 m openings towards Europe. From 20:00 there may be 15, 20 and 80 m openings towards the USA.

For the CW and digital enthusiasts it will also be worth monitoring 10 MHz.

Locally conditions on 40 m is going to be good during the day and even 30 m may perform well over the longer distances.

It is once again time to work towards your 80 m WAZS award in the evenings, thunderstorms permitting! Remember that this is only a prediction and that HF always has the capability to surprise you. You will never know what you are missing unless you switch your rig on, listen and also call CQ.

Please visit www.spaceweather.co.za for further information.

DIARY OF EVENTS

27 October Open day at the HMO; 30 November Closing date for nominations for SARL Councillors.

SARL News invites clubs and individuals to submit news stories of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners. Submit news stories if possible in both English and Afrikaans to www.sarl.org.za/newsinbox.asp not later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

The SARL also invites you to listen to the programme Amateur Radio Mirror International, on the air every Sunday morning at 10:00 CAT on 145,750 MHz in the Pretoria area with relays on 7 082, 7 205 and 17 590 kHz. For the web stream and echolink by ZS6FCS visit www.sarl.org.za, click on ARMI and follow the links. A repeat transmission can be heard Mondays at 21:00 CAT on 3 215 kHz. Sentech sponsors the ARMI transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

Today's South African Radio League news bulletin was compiled by George, ZS6NE, and transmitted by (your name and call sign).

Thank you for listening. 73.

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